

SIGNS OF IMPROVEMENT: NEW STREET AND BUS-STOP SIGNS TO AID BUSY COMMUTERS

While driving in a typical South Florida down-pour, 69-year-old Miami-Dade resident Alberto Hernández squinted to read the street sign at the intersection of Douglas Road and Northwest 199 Street.

"Some of these signs are so faded that when it rains, you hardly can read them," Hernández said of many county street signs in dire need of being replaced.

Since December 2003, over 8,000 faded ground-mounted street signs have been replaced with new, more legible signs.

As part of the People's Transportation Plan, the County is replacing old street signs, as well as bus-stop signs, to bring a new level of visibility and information to drivers and transit riders. The half-penny transportation surtax, approved in the November 2002 election, funds both PTP projects.

In addition to replacing thousands of faded street name signs, this fall, the Miami-Dade County Public Works Department will begin a one-year pilot program to install 64 illuminated street name signs at 17 signalized intersections throughout the county. The larger letters of the new illuminated signs comply with federal regulations, while the internal fluorescent lighting increases nighttime visibility.

The more modern illuminated street signs, which are about 6-feet wide and 2-feet tall, will make traveling around the county easier, according to Jacqueline Coleman, construction manager for a Miami-based contracting firm.

"I think it's great because getting around this city is a bit confusing anyway. There are so many different kinds of street signs out there. Some are

hard to read and some are on the ground, so it's better to create new ones," Coleman added.

Part of the reason the signs are being replaced with bigger, brighter signs is to make it easier for tourists to find their way around the county.

"Street signs are vital to any thriving metropolis, especially Miami-Dade County. We have a lot of tourists and newcomers to this county, so bigger and brighter signs will help all of us in terms of safety and traffic flow," explained Aristides Rivera, P.E., P.L.S., director of the County's Public Works Department.

Equally important, by the end of August 2004, 1,000 new bus-stop signs, which include an information panel, will be installed at key-transit transfer points countywide.

Many of these vandal-resistant signs will be installed next to the new, solar-powered bus-stop shelters. The remaining 8,000 signs, designed to withstand hurricane-force winds, will be replaced over the next few months.

Unlike previous bus-stop signs, the information panels on the new signs offer maps and up-to-date information on routes serving a particular bus stop.

"Our goal is to increase the amount of transit information given to

passengers at bus stops. Eventually, all bus-stop signs will feature the new design," said Miami-Dade Transit Director Roosevelt Bradley.

For more information on the People's Transportation Plan, call 305-884-7567, Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or log on to www.trafficrelief.com.



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